BEER POWERED BICYCLE: NARRATIVE ETHNOGRAPHY AND PRINT REPRESENTATIONS OF PUNK/HARDCORE CULTURE

A Senior Honors Thesis

By

Stephanie M. Stanbro

Submitted to the Office of Honors Programs
& Academic Scholarships
Texas A&M University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements of the

UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE
RESEARCH FELLOWS

April 2000

Group:

Cultural Studies

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Approved as to style and content by:

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ABSTRACT

Beer Powered Bicycle: Narrative Ethnography and
Print Representations of Punk/Hardcore Culture

Research Fellows. (April 2000)

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A "zine" is not considered an abbreviated form of magazine. Instead it is a separate category of publication based around the non-profit and non-professional nature of its authors and producers. Zines regularly address issues absent from mainstream media sources. I examined zines from the punk/hardcore genre and focuses on the language and style used within the zines and how individual authors create identity and separate from mass media and culture. Each person who makes a zine becomes an active part of what it means to be punk. With phrases such as "Resistance is you" and "If you don't speak out who will speak for you?" involvement in punk/hardcore subculture is further made personal and individual by the creation, distribution and consuming of zines. I examined zines from two centers of punk/hardcore activity in the U.S., Portland, Oregon and Austin, Texas. I also conducted ethnographic fieldwork in these to areas recording and experiencing the people and culture producing punk/hardcore zines.

This interdisciplinary research draws from the fields of sociology, anthropology, linguistics and cultural studies. As a participant observer, I took an ethnographic approach to analyzing the textual materials of punk/hardcore culture. I attempted to address ethical issues concerning authorship, relations between the researched and the researcher and complex relationship between different representation voices within the punk and zine community.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost I would like to thank Dr. Mary Bucholtz for pushing this project along from start to finish and providing all the fellowship a young researcher could ever need, to find her voice, to find a way. Then I must thank the kind souls who allowed me to interview, follow or otherwise pester in the one and a half years I spent working on punk zines: Amy Joy Tuepker, Eric Gonzalez, Patrick and Sly, Lisa Oglesby among many other helpful and wonderful people. Last, I want to thank, HeartattCk, though I never made it California to interview everyone, I owe the imagination and inspiration of this project to your dedication to making punk more than music and showing me that voice is resistance and resistance is you.

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> The punk/hardcore community is meant to be a place where diversity and communication are encouraged. A place to feel comfortable expressing the ideas that are often looked down upon or are ignored by 'mainstream' society. A place to explore and act upon all of these new ideas and gain a better perspective on your own life, and the lives of others. I know that it does not always live up to its potential, but that is where I see a large part of the value and inspiration in punk coming from. Each and every person in the punk community has a voice.
>
> *HeartattaCk*

Introduction

A "zine" is not an abbreviated form of magazine. It is instead a separate category of publication based around the non-profit and non-professional nature of its authors and publishers. Zines regularly address issues absent from mainstream media sources. Issues of race, gender, sexuality, the body, and economics located outside of mass media are presented, debated, and criticized in zines. In my research I sought to explore the intersections of zines and punk and how individuals construct identity for themselves and for the whole punk community within the context of zines. I knew that punk/hardcore zines was an ambiguous and difficult topic to study. The names that individuals use to describe what they do and how they live can often overlap. In order to avoid a reductionist view of both zines and punk I approached the definition of these terms generally and allowed the texts and individuals I came in contact with to give shape to these movements.

In order to explore zines and punk I decided to do two things, collect information about zines and punk as well information about the people who make zines and the people who identify themselves as punk. I examined zines from two centers of punk/hardcore activity in the United States, Portland, Oregon, and Austin, Texas. I also conducted ethnographic fieldwork in these to areas, recording and experiencing the people and culture producing punk/hardcore zines. This interdisciplinary research draws from the fields of sociology, anthropology, linguistics and cultural studies. As a participant observer, I took an ethnographic approach to analyzing the textual materials of punk/hardcore culture. I have attempted to address ethical issues concerning authorship, relations between the researched and the researcher and complex relationship between different representations of voice within the punk and zine community. Through textual analysis and ethnographic fieldwork in these two areas, I encountered a series of overlapping, contradicting, and ambiguous voices regarding the meaning of punk and role zines play in developing punk identity. These very same traits of contrast and individual opinion are the backbone of what it means to be punk from its earliest forms to punk life in modern day America.

Zines

"Fuck the mass media and its distorted portrayal of life and reality."

86lbs. Of Punk

Zines are self-published, small press, often photocopied or handmade publications appealing to niche or individualized audiences. What niche or audience a zine appeals to can vary widely, from rollercoasters and hoboing to Christian punk

music and straight-edged living in Lincoln, Nebraska[1]. Zines share three basic qualities: An emphasis on autonomy and independence, a confrontational relationship with mainstream media and culture, and are specifically not-for-profit ventures. The DIY (Do-It-Yourself) aspect of zines reinforces an alternative market system, where zines are shared for information or interest and not specifically for commercial gain, since very few zines turn any kind of profit and for the most part are part-time efforts (Wright 1997). The main distinction between zines and magazines is that magazines are made for money while zines are made for personal, emotional, or ideological reasons. Many individuals create zines in an effort to create a voice for their beliefs and to express dissatisfaction with one or more elements of mainstream society.

"What is a zine? [Sounds like Maga-] What is the purpose? It is: Adding handmade spice and special reasoning to the media glitz that surrounds us in white noise."

Rough and Tumble Life

The word "zine" evolved more from fanzine than magazine. Fanzines are also small press publications but they support a specific hobby or interest, in the case of most fanzines, science fiction. Wright agrees that zines and fanzines share essential qualities

[1] *Grundig* from Portland, Oregon, *Famous Last Words* and *No Scene Zine*

like the distribution within a specific community. Though they can often be found in specialty shops zines and fanzines are usually distributed through a selective mail order process through listings in other zines, and collections of zine reviews. They also share a strong identity as an open forum with the inclusion of the publisher's and contributor's names and addresses and an encouragement for readers to actively participate in the zine's creation by sending in response letters and articles. Zines and fanzines are both non-professional, though some may include professional elements such as color, graphics, professional printing and paper.

Zines evolved from fanzines mostly through a need for flexibility. Fanzines are about a particular consumer practice, for example a genre/brand of role playing games. Zines, as opposed to fanzines, are not more general but more holistic, describing products, music, ideologies and experiences together as a unified whole. Today the main influence on zine authors is exposure to other zines. For the most part, potential zine authors have an issue or concern they want to express or some time on their hands and look to zines they enjoy as inspiration for their own work.

One of the most important issues in my research was authenticity. Throughout this project I was asked by a number of individuals in my academic community how I was able to tell which zines were punk, or what "counted" as a zine. I asked the same question to members of both the punk and zine community as well as looked into one of the several currently published "zine review" zines. Individuals told me that they just knew that a zine was authentic. One of them, Bryan cited the zine *Bust* as a zine that was once authentic but had grown too large and now represented a magazine.

In the large zine directory, *Zine List* several of the listed zines contained reviews lamenting specific publication's loss of authenticity through growth. Bryan also told me that *Flipside* and *Maximum Rock n' Roll*, early and influential zines, were not zines anymore. In an email interview Lisa, an editor/writer for *HeartattaCk* told me that HaC was started as a response to *Maximum Rock n' Roll's* shift from zine to 'something else.'

In my research I came across a number of publications I chose not too include as punk zines because they did not deal with punk issues, such as *Third Coast Music*, a country and western music zine from Austin, Texas. However, I counted every publication I came across in my search for zines. I looked for zines listed in zine directories, available for purchase in the zine section of a store, or cataloged in one of the two zine libraries I visited, perhaps too willing to trust the employees', editors' or curators' judgement as to what was a zine.[2]

Of late seventies punk zines, Dick Hebdige said that the authenticity in punk zines lies in the sense of immediacy in the making of zines: "Typing errors and grammatical mistakes, misspellings and jumbled pagination were left uncorrected in the final proof... The overwhelming impression was one of urgency and immediacy, of a paper produced in indecent haste, of memos from the front line" (Hebdige,1979). The avant-garde aspects of zines remind readers of the author's presence in the creation of zines. Zine publishers often use non-standard forms in page layout and unconventional grammar as well as sometime using underdeveloped publishing techniques, such as cut and past photocopying. As a consequence, zine readers are constantly reminded of the

amateurish nature of zines. Being an amateur, or at least appearing unprofessional is an essential part of being a zine maker.

The article, 'Dying of a Zinc Poisoning,' in the Austin zine *All the Rage,* is about a text of questionable zine status produced by the *Austin-American Statesman.* Author John Cowe questions the motives of the press as "a crass marketing effort at us 18-34 year olds." It's not the content of the zine he objects to, but what he believes is exploitation of underground culture. "They're trying to use us. We create something vital. They suck out what they think is marketable." Issues of authenticity are clearly raised in his comment, "calling it a zine was a credibility move, and the target audience doesn't know what a true zine is." The connection is clear: zines are an authentic part of youth culture and imitations of zines are not. An imitation is zine-like material that is made for profit. It is not the non-mainstream style of a zine that is authentic. (The in-color, glossy, 154-page *Punk Planet* is still a zine). Authentic punk people make authentic punk zines. That is why punk zines can have nothing to do with stereotypical punk issues, like music, yet still be punk. DIY is one vital aspect of punk identity, the belief that the individual has the power to accomplish and create rather than relying on business and bureaucracy. The DIY approach goes hand in hand with the movement punk started and its sustained critique of mass culture.

Punk

"Punk rock is not solely about music… at least not any punk rock that I want to be a part of."

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[2] Zine libraries: The Safe Haven Zine Library in Austin, TX and the Independent Publisher's Library in

The late 1970's initially saw two divergent developments in punk culture, distinctly British and American styles. By the end of that decade the popularity of the British band the Sex Pistols in the mainstream media, along with bands such as X-Ray Spex, The Clash, and Siouxie and The Banshees firmly situated, for many, punk as a British cultural phenomenon.

Leblanc notes that in America punk's emphasis was on music rather than style, developing a flourishing punk music scene. Influenced by some of punk's predecessors, MC5 and Iggy and the Stooges, the club CBGB, opened on New York's Lower East Side. It featured artists such as the Ramones, and Television and helped a music movement that operated in direct response to what many felt was the over-commercialized and lifeless spectrum of mainstream music available in the late seventies. The scene was given its name by Legs McNeil and John Holstrom when they started their zine, *Punk*, in 1975. In a later interview, Legs McNeil said that he chose the name specifically for its negative connotations of youth. "On TV, if you watched cop shows, *Kojak, Beretta,* when the cops finally catch the mass murderer, they'd say, 'you dirty Punk.' It was what your teachers would call you. It meant that you were the lowest" (Leblanc, 1999). Thus begins punk's long intentional association with crime, violence and the purposeful construction of negative images.

In Britain, Punk grew up less organically and utilized the new movement's commercial aspects at the start. Malcolm McLaren, after a visit to New York, changed

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the name of his clothing store from the "King's Road" to "Sex." He hired his employees to market his clothes that drew on social taboos. The clerks wore a mix of androgynous clothes, leather, bondage items, and other taboo goods to provoke both public response and increased sales. Chrissie Hinde from the Pretenders, who worked as a designer in the shop said, of leather and punk, "Back then, leather was considered armor. It was all about being obnoxious and rubbing society's nose in its own weakness[3]" (Fox, 1999). Punks wore taboo items as street clothes bringing out the issues associated with them, sexuality and androgyny, out into the public sphere. Early British punk style was characterized by fluidity, contrast, contradiction and ambiguity; a characteristic that some say was lost in 1980's punk development when standardized modes of dress and formal political agendas evolved. Early punk style was a juxtaposition of symbol and style, bricolage, intermixing elements of high fashion and low fashion and experimenting with color and materials.

When McLaren decided to form the Sex Pistols in the summer of 1975, punk as commodity began its rise from London into a worldwide marketplace. The Sex Pistols' popularity meant several things to punk. Forever there would be a separation between 'fashion' punks and 'authentic' punks. Punk image and punk values developed a complicated relationship and to this day, people perform punk and are chided for it and people live, but do not look punk, and are never recognized as part of the community.

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[3] Chrissie Hinde was arrested in March 1999 accused of destroying leather garments in New York city. She remains a supporter of punk, though not as directly involved in the movement as she was twenty years ago. Currently, many punks feel that cruelty to animals and the use of animal products are social isues punk helps them address. Where leather was once a symbol of rebellion, destroying it has become symbolic of the dynamic politics of punk.

After the Sex Pistols self-destructed in 1978, punk faded from mainstream media attention and, for many people, died. Karen Pinkus (1998) notes that as the initial shock of punk passed, the purpose of the movement found itself without motivation and without further developments.

> No Future was the dispiriting anthem of the Sex Pistols, but as it was intoned by crowds of punks, it became a kind of energizing mantra...Punk has no future, not because of any specific condition exterior to the movement, but because it is intrinsically impossible to remain a Punk. If the movement is named, known and read and textualized, it has ceased to live. As soon as the Sex Pistols are, they are finished... 'No Future' is not a protest slogan or a call for change; it is an epigrammatic actualization of the end of avant-garde. (pg. 191)

However, punk does continue both as a musical and political movement. The 80's saw the rise of Hardcore and political motivated bands such as Crass and Minor Threat. Hardcore started in San Francisco as a reaction to the peace oriented youth movements of the 1960's and 70's. The new youth, unhappy with the legacy of Haight-Ashbury, started faster, hardedge bands accompanied by highly politicized lyrics. The change is so effective that much of the flexibility punk enjoyed in its beginnings was lost in the 1980's to a code of anti-social, and increasingly masculine, symbolism. It seemed at this time to exclude women and minorities—ironically, the biggest potential beneficiaries from a movement of this kind. In the 1990's hardcore has aimed at representing a sociopolitical version of punk increasingly open to participation of a diverse population and many ideological viewpoints, most of which are disavowed from

mainstream culture. Distinctly American, hardcore became the future of punk and remains today a preferred term for separating fashion and politically motivated punks.

> The label of hardcore is hard to associate, but I can't think of doing it another way. I feel I'm young in this scene. I did other things before. I used to think it was about the music but I don't like that much of the music anymore. I feel it's more of a personal issue. Hardcore is Self-Empowerment. Actions reflect ideology. I call it hardcore because there's not another word for it. Punk is more fashion and music oriented, hardcore isn't. Hardcore is more than Musicfest. I went last year and I thought it was naïve. They were trying to save the world with veganism. Activism is overrated, yet in a large part a lot of activism is even exploited. Hardcore is very idealistic. But some people don't mean it. They go to a protest march but still live the average college life, working for a corporation, eating meat.
>
> Bryan, Austin punk

> Hardcore is just a word. We use it to describe where we base ourselves in terms of HaC [*HeartattaCk*]. In the sense that hardcore is a lifestyle and a way of living, you can't really pin point its sound. I could sit here and talk about all the little things that are "punk" and all the things that are "hardcore" but they are really the same thing. They are words we use to describe our lives.
>
> Lisa, *HeartattaCk*, Goleta, CA

> Hardcore is a positive force and I hope that I can help show kids who don't know about this culture, what they are missing. I encourage you to do a few things. Support the scene. Go to concerts, buy zines and indie music, join or support groups you believe in, boycott those you don't. Support small businesses. Be nice to people. Unity is a really good idea…Try to better yourself—better diets, educate yourself, try finding truth through spirituality. Your bodies, minds and mostly your souls are the most valuable things you have. Take care of yourselves
>
> *Famous Last Words*

Later in the same editorial, Zack critiques hardcore as not accepting of his religion, Christianity. "When I got into hardcore I was under the assumption that it was a forum where people could have different beliefs and not have to suffer for it, much like the real world is supposed to be like… I thought as long as you were devoted to your beliefs and didn't try to force people to accept your beliefs, then that was what hardcore was about." Zack's critique implies that hardcore is not just about universal acceptance and that not every lifestyle is appreciated. *Tough Love* a zine calling itself, "your connection to the punk—vegan—dyke scene of Portland Oregon." It includes this disclaimer: "*Tough Love* is for entertainment purposes only. Sarah Membrane and friends do not endorse you turning your back on all of your straight, carnivorous friends. Every human has worth. Even your straight, carnivorous friends. Even if they watch a

lot of television and listen to Z-100. Even if they drive their car 5 blocks to Fred Meyer[4] and never buy in bulk. Love is the key that will set us free." This zine mixes ideas of exclusion and inclusion, distancing "straight, carnivorous friends" while still accepting them. It appears that the code in hardcore is to be accepting and non-exclusionary, but in practice the dynamic of what kinds of people individual accept and what kinds of practices are tolerated and encouraged depends on the individual, the scene, and the ideological positioning of any given group of punks. Where one group may see punk as embracing veganism (*Tough Love* and many of the punks I talked with in Portland), others criticize veganism as a hollow mantra. These views are not conflicting yet conflicted. They represent different perspectives on hardcore and different applications of hardcore's message.

Punk has always associated with taboo subjects. Sexual, social and even a brief flirtation with Nazism, punk has sought to cultivate a negative image for the purpose of demystifying the unnatural and the unnormative in the things that society labels wrong. Punk worked hard to establish itself as not counterculture but anticulture. Subcultures seek to provide alternative modes within the structural framework. Anticulture movements propose to wholly deconstruct society and operate on a level for the most part outside of structural norms. This often happens in cultures when individuals do not maintain

[4] Fred Meyer is a grocery store in the Portland area.

careers, or live in conventional dwellings, do not pursue official methods of education, secondary school or college. Some punks live on the streets as voluntary (sometimes involuntary) homeless. Punk worked as a musical and political movement not only to criticize society but also to offer a restructured lifestyle outside of norms.

Whether or not punk has succeeded in providing more than an alternative to mainstream culture and reconstructing a separate set of identities outside paradigms of contemporary society is debatable. The goal in itself is enough to further explore the intentions of punk and for whom and to what end are violating taboos, anarchy, the acceptance of a variety of sexualities[5], veganism, straightedge[6], Marxism and aggression to a perceived oppressive other markers of punk's value as cultural critique.

Punk Zines

Not every zine explicitly discusses punkness. Not every punk zine talks about music. Some zines ignore these subjects and veer from the zine "format" of editorial, interview, article, and review to discuss

[5] In my research, homosexuality was usually of the female/female development though a positive attitude existed for all type of sexual identities and orientations. How far this acceptance extends is debatable. I never found any direct evidence that all patterns of sexuality were equally embraced.
[6] Straightedge is a punk movement developed in the 1980's emphasizing a clean body and mind and refraining form drugs, alcohol and tobacco. Strict adherents also abstain from sex, caffeine and animal products. A variety of people may call themselves straightedge, but practice all or few of the taboos, but certainly not every punk who is substance free identifies themselevs as straightedge. For some, straightedge has a negative reputation of violence.

personal or political issues without overt musical content. Often zines parody magazine and zine norms in order to draw attention to the opinions of the author. *Slugs Love Salt* includes a show review section designated with a title. Under the heading the author talks about how his feeling that show review sections are boring and a waste of time, and that he always hates including the section. Here conventions in the zine format are clear. The author has the freedom in his content, and uses the form to express himself. *T.P. Alternative*, issue #2, includes a feedback page to tear out and send in. No other part of the photocopied, handwritten zine resembles mainstream media forms so the stylistic presentation of the feedback page contrasts with the zine as whole drawing attention in its awkwardness to the norms of magazines. It parodies a convention of mainstream media, while serving the very same function.

"Please fill this page out, rip it out and send it to the address at the bottom.

Thanks a million—the T.P. Alternative Staff"

Real people make punk zines and, like the individuals who make them, zines present different, sometimes conflicting perspectives. Zines are voices for punks and non-punks[7]. They are produced with the intent that they are shared with those willing to listen.

For my research, I identified four zine characters[8] with which to locate any punk zine. They are: local scene zine, theme zine, perzine, and rant zine. All of these

[7] People who don associate themselves with punk can also read zines and punk zines. Specific audience does not always mean restricted audience and as in the case of *Mystery Date* and *Murder Can Be Fun.*
[8] I chose character rather than characteristic for its broader and less exclusionary tendencies. These are not definitions, merely patterns.

character types can be considered punk, either directly through the content of the zine or in the identity of the author. Perzine is a locally used term within the community and the other terms I hesitate to make but do so only to facilitate examples.

Local scene zines cover the activities of an area around the zine publisher. The zine's content is dominated by interviews with bands touring the area, music reviews of local and national bands relevant to the local scene and editorials often addressing the 'state of the zine' discussing local scene politics and events. *Jersey Beat* located Weehawken, NJ covers New Jersey and some of New York. No Scene Zine claims it is the only "straightedge zine in Lincoln, Nebraska." This very small zine consisting of three or four unfolded 8 ½ x 11 photocopied sheets thoroughly covers the straightedge scene in Lincoln, NE including a common zine element, requests for pen pals. Part of the zine and punk community is communication. Punks who live in rural areas or areas of low punk population, the Midwest and South, often use mail in order to find individuals with

similar opinions and lifestyles. Local scene zines help unite members in the same geographic location assisting in establishing lines of communication.

Themed zines have a particular theme overseeing their content. *Mystery Date* (femininity and mass consumer culture in the post war era) and *Murder Can Be Fun* (unusual accidents, deaths and disasters) both deal with topics outside punk culture and yet are still punk. John Marr said of his zine, "I like to think of *Murder Can Be Fun* as being a punk rock zine that has nothing to do with music. When I started publishing most punk rock zines were totally generic; stupid record reviews, lame band interviews and dumb scene reports…I wanted to make MCBF the kind of zine that punks would want to read even though there is nothing in there about the Ramones" (Shaw, 1999).

A perzine is a personal account zine about someone's life, beliefs and experiences. *86lbs of Punk* is a perzine from Austin in which the author Dinky talks about her life as a punk.

"Don't think that you missed out on the last 8 months of my adventures, pals. 86lbs of Punk is back and I'm practically telling you how many times I chewed my food in this 30-page issue."

Perzines can also center on a personal issue very close to the author. *Left Unsaid (Mind—Body)* deals with the authors' view on her own anorexia nervosa. "When I was thirteen they said I was crazy. I tried to kill myself. Not fast with a knife or anything. I did it slow. I didn't eat. I used to be obsessed with food, eating but not eating. 'Oh, I'll have a bite of that, but no more.' In hindsight it was a pretty boring way to die." She goes on to talk about what punk meant for her. "Punk was freedom for me. But at first it didn't mean much, just proving that I looked different than the other kids at my school. I desperately wanted to be carefree and wild. I have this drive to self-destruct. I wanted to go down in flames, not collapse quietly. I wanted to be able to dance in front at shows, getting caught up in the emotion, the darkness."

Rant zines have emotionally charged editorials by one or several authors expressing their opinion in strong and direct language. These are similar to perzines but are more abstract and less event-oriented in daily activity. Rant zines are usually about a specific topic concerning the creators such as veganism, unschooling[9], homophobia, straight edgedness or violence. In many ways rant zines are the activist voice for the

[9] Unschooling advocates un-learning school and relearning on your own. Unschoolers encourage young people to leave high to school and educate themselves. *Back to School* discuses several reasons why public secondary education is restrictive and inhuman.

zine community. Perzines represent personal, private and individual issues while rant zines treat public and moral topics.

Back to School from Portland, Oregon is, "all about the effects school does and doesn't have on youth, and it is about how and why things should change. It is normal to believe that compulsory education is the best way to educate our future workforce. I do believe however, that if you do, you are just another being that has been brainwashed by the system. I will do what I can to help educate you and offer you a new perspective."

Today images of punk and hardcore span a range of values and symbols. In the aging process, punk's definition has widened to include both flexibility and codification. How is this accomplished? How can punk conflict with itself and its historical development while maintaining punk affiliation? I will present the answer to these questions in a way I feel is most ethical and respectful of the myriad opinions and voices represented in punk.

Ethics and Authorship

According to Hegel, our own individual subjectivity is possible only in virtue of our relationship to and recognition of an other as object, who is similarly subject as we are. This means that for Hegel our individuality is necessarily social, in that we are only individuals in relation to others. This relationship is necessarily an ethical one: the way in which we identify the other, the kind of subject she is, mediates our relationship with society and the world. Since I can only recognize myself as an individual subject in relative to an other, my relationship with that other constitutes both my identity as well

as the social identity of those I come in contact with (Thomas, 1989). This relationship is more profound and pronounced in ethnographic fieldwork because contact with a culture that is not your own forces the researcher to form a relationship with the culture she is studying. This "first impression" dictates and influences all the ethnographic work that follows. The researcher must always to take an ethical stand towards the people whom she studies. Her voice identifies people through her fieldwork creating an other. She defines the role of the community in relation to her own cultural context. Research is ethical in that it is action with a moral dimension. To do research is to engage a community, and to engage is to approach from a perspective that as such identifies (constitutes) the community as a social entity, along with all the social implications that come with being identified in that particular way.

This ethical relationship is especially evident in research of 'new' cultures. The first time two cultures come in contact the "first impression" often comes through the anthropologist. The identity of the culture is then mediated through this relation, and the treatment of the culture as equal, inferior, primitive, etc. occurs in virtue of this initial (ethical) identification. The methodology of a researcher is always already mediated by social structures and the ethical approach of the researcher is culturally and specifically biased. This makes her role no less ethical, for social relations are always in flux, and the way in which the researcher portrays the culture in their work can either reinforce the status quo, or undermine prevailing opinions often subtly through literary technique.

Researcher is the voice of two communities, both her own to the community under study, and of the community under study to her own. Many forget that being the

voice of the community under study is to mediate that voice, to translate it into the community of the researcher. This translation is ethical (no complete, precise translation is possible between two cultures or even communities), and presents the social identity of the groups being studied to the researcher's community. The researcher is also the voice of her own community, and brings with it change to the community under study, no matter how small.

Ethnography properly done, is also a critique directed at revealing the metaphors and assumptions that underline culture and cultural study. The researcher has the potential to bring a different perspective into the community, dialectically altering herself and the community in a positive direction. Such work would reveal the underlying assumptions of both research and researched. The researcher in this case would not study the community directly, but move into that community and speak from within its boundaries.

The reflexive approach in post modern anthropology uses the experiences of the researcher as an active and vocal mediator between culture and text (Rosaldo, 1989). In this way, the researcher can be a participant, either native or exegenic, in the community and develop the language necessary to effectively communicate difference to the reader.

This ethnography is not a study told from the etic or a transcendent authoritative perspective, but rather a narrative or story told from the borderlands of two communities, a sort of realm of cultural intersubjectivity which belongs wholly to neither culture. Narrative ethnography as a discourse can be used to undermine the authoritative voice of

the ethnographer and re-place it in the subjective space between the meaningful and the different.

The work of Saussure recognized that language is meaningful only in terms of a word's structural difference from other words (Saussure, 1972). This insight is significant for the ethnographer because language is ultimately meaningful only within a cultural context. Scientific ethnography seeks to objectively translate meaning from the culture under study into its own language and cultural context. Authorship and the author are for science the conduit of true cultural meaning.

My approach to cultural study is generally situated in postmoderism and its attempts to vocalize traditionally ignored issues of subjectivity and authority.[10]

Ethnography is truly an ethical critique rather than a study in that to write ethnography one must not become just a participant observer but an actual member of the community or culture under 'study'. To perform a critique one must embed oneself into a culture to the extent that one is not a researcher but a dialectical member of the community, breaking down the distinction between researcher and researched. The 'researcher' provides a voice for the community, not as her own transcendental voice or the voice of an overarching narrative of science told from the outside, but as one who is able to speak meaningfully within the community, to use language the community understands. In the end, its goal is to produce documentation that is reflective and mutually intelligible with the language and values of both cultures.

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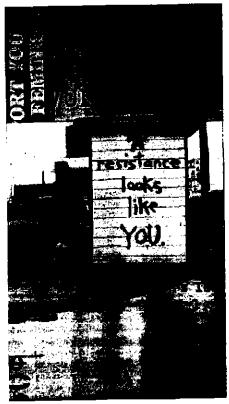
[10]See generally (Derrida, 1974), (Rabinow, 1994) and (Althusser, 1969)

Resistance

In a world that constantly tells you to step in line and shut up, it can be a great challenge to open your mouth and speak. Even though it may not be easy, it is important—because if you don't speak for yourself then somebody will undoubtedly speak for you and I, for one, don't want my voice to be taken away by Nike or McDonald's or Generation X.

HeartattaCk



Are zines messengers of punk? Is punk the content of zines? Essentially what is the difference between punk and zines? As forms of resistance, there is not much of a difference. They act in order to achieve the same goal, garnering voice and using it to speak up and out for their beliefs.

The issues that concern punks and zine makers depend on who you are talking to and where they come from. Many punks struggle enough to establish and maintain identity in a hostile community. *Spongey Monkey*, a zine based in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi manages its identity as both the only zine in the area and the only local source for punk and underground information. Its creators, both immigrants from Olympia, Washington live and work on the Mississippi Gulf Coast but sometimes come at odds with the local

community. Hardcore from Olympia to Mississippi varies, because the influences on the area and the amount public support for the community vary.

The authenticity of zine authorship lies in the individual. The meaning of punk lives within the voice of the few criticizing the many. Resistance to mainstream ideals and practice is an integral part of both punk and zine making. Because these two activities share this perspective, publications made by punks and zine makers blur the lines between form and genre, individual and ideal.

Reading resistance asks questions about who is resisting what and how society is prompting negative attitudes. *This Could Be the Day* is a zine published from the Powerhouse in Portland, Oregon. When my friend Amy lived there she shared the four-bedroom house with 20 other people. The Powerhouse was a starting point for a lot of kids who left behind a part of their lives for punk. The othering process in this excerpt is clear: *they* are the ones who control us and *we* are the ones with something to lose.

> "Everyday we are taught the harsh, ugly ideals of our culture, we are taught work ethic, to serve the master and earn a wage that puts a value on our time. We are taught to mistrust each other... Everyday we are reminded that our thoughts and beliefs and lifestyles must fit into the ideals of a Christian oriented society or they will be regarded as invalid or disregarded altogether. We are taught how to fit neatly into our predetermined gender roles (how to keep the power in the hands of men and how to cope with in the inequality of women.) We are forced to seek capitol—consume, consume, consume. We are force-fed allegiance to our country and adoration of its foundation. We are lied to, stolen from, cheated.

> As I see it, we have no choice but to rebel against the powers-that-be. Revolt against the norm. Live a revolution… So many people are trying to reach a future revolution or concentrate too much on 'burning the rich' and in general 'fucking shit up.' Even though that is a valid way of fighting—it seems like there is an easier way to resist. We can offer support and understanding to one another. We can question everything and establish for ourselves what we want to believe. We can offer praise or support for one another's works, ideas, or art so as not to rely on corporate recognition. All of these things take power and put it in our hands—take something oppressive and make it progressive. So can we practice revolution in all aspects of our lives, utilizing our good traits as a defense against the bad ones pushed on us? Can we live out of compassion for all things?"

Narratives

Narrative allows us to hear an auditory echo or trace of voice of another culture that is being described within the researcher's cultural context. The narrative is an amalgamation of language, words and meanings as the ethnographer introduces them to both cultures. Since the ethnographer must find intersections of meaning relevant to both cultures in order to make a translation, the creation of cultural meaning is an ethical event. It is ethical in the sense that it allows the ethnographer to import value into her translation. As an example, I show the case of DIY, the punk ethic of accomplishing goals without the help of corporate or professional sponsorship. Either in record production and distribution or the making of zines, DIY inspires punks to take an active part in their community on a personal level. DIY can also denote an unwillingness to or

incapability to work within the parameters of culture. Since these outcast members are otherwise unable to get record deals or opportunities of publication through mainstream venues, they must create, sometimes haphazardly, their own. Which definition of DIY I, as researcher and author, choose to tell the reader depends on my orientation in punk. If I compare DIY to populism and carpenters or to existentialism and slackers, or neither, I reveal my bias inherent as a message carrier of culture.

The ethnographer spontaneously produces meanings new to both cultures through the addition of signifiers from the borderlands of both cultures. The new chain of signifiers (meaning) is produced through common linguistic usage. The narrative as method of discourse produces a cultural understanding of sameness rather than difference.

Historically, narrative in ethnography has had to exist in another borderland that between fact and fiction. Zora Neale Hurston, and anthropologist writer straddled the line between anthropology and fiction, and in the end became a fiction writer. Margery Wolf looks at this problem in her thrice portrayal of the same event, in fictional narrative, raw note data, and formal academic article form. She explores the idea of narrative technique from a work of fiction she wrote. She finds the approach difficult and sees a kind of crisis in narrative ethnographies. (Wolf,1992) In order to write in a re-creative way, details are described and extended using literary techniques. When literary devices enter into the ethnographer's account the potential exits for fiction, for the inclusion of details that did not actually happen, or assumptions of meaning and motivation on the part of the community the researcher cannot know. This is especially

problematic in third person accounts. Van Maanen and Crapanzano[11] claim that third person narrative form is used to appear more authoritative. In the process of third person narration, images and emotions that the author feels may find themselves imposed on the described culture. First person accounts of narrative help, by allowing a reflexive approach to the narrative as well as locating the source of interpretation and meaning in the voice of the researcher, where it actually comes from. Differences of meaning from the perspective of community are at least addressed instead of allowing the distant third person voice to 'convince' the reader that the narrative text is the one true voice. Authorial integrity though important for developing an audience does not succeed in ethically representing culture.

Presentation is the actual occurrence of events in a culture and realism is an attempt to re- present or present again these cultures that the ethnographer observes in the field. Representation is post-observational recounting of culture, whether based on recorded data or headnotes[12] or both. Van Maanen in his survey of ethnographic method, *Tales From The Field*, states that realism is the most popular form of ethnographic writing. In realism, narrative provides a sensate aid to readers, bringing them along on a journey through past events. Realism ignores the fact that its own re-presenting is another form of representation and does not provide a completely authentic and unbiased portrait of culture.

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[11] Crapanzano claims authors' literary techniques are 'tricks' to make the text more believable in his deconstruction of narrative works.

[12] Margery Wolf refers to headnotes as the memories the author has of ethnographic events. This information is often not included in recorded notes yet included in final written analysis.

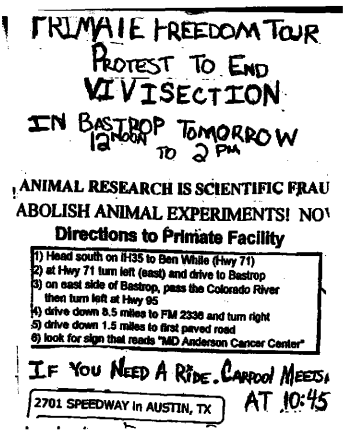
What is left to do then with reality? Ethnographic approaches should attempt to reclaim material lost to realism and its representation rather than presentation of culture. The objectification of culture in realism silences all individual voices except for the narrative author and does not address non-consensus between the perceptions of the etic and emic. What then, is the role of the author, the academic in re-presentation? The most important thing the author can do is give up her authorial voice for the voices of those she studies. Then she can allow the readers to experience in narrative form, culture as it presents itself to her without enclosing it in analysis and relying on authorial objectivity to provide a summation of reality.

Point A is a new venue in Austin, a warehouse in a mainly Hispanic residential neighborhood on the *other* side of I-35. It's just down the street from Bryan's house. I stop by the restaurant where he works and wait for him in the parking lot. He gets in to his deep brown, aged Volkswagen van and drives down 6th street, downtown Austin, across the interstate to the show. Walking behind him like a little sister, we enter the venue. The entrance is flanked by a book sale of animal testing, leftist, liberatory, and Marxist material. Behind the card tables covered with books, zines, stickers, and posters stand a tall thin man who looks as old as Joey Ramone. He makes change, offered suggestions and answers questions about the books. I talk with him for a moment, buy every copy of *Cometbus* he has with him, and walk off to find Bryan. The warehouse is big with exposed wooden rafters and large metal loading doors filled with people carrying equipment to the stage. The stage isn't one. It is the line on the floor at which

the audience stops and the performer stands who at this time is spoken word lesbian punk who is beginning to make me blush. Bryan points to a staircase at the left that leads to a cool record/zine store. About fifty people are milling around talking, buying things or sitting and listening to woman at the stage.

I'm not sure how it happened, but while I was looking at some of the books several cops approached the venue and tried to get in the now closed doors. I hear the heavy rapping of the cops fist on the metal doors, they are yelling to open the door. The people inside refuse and stand in uneasy silence. Underage drinkers are sloshing their beers on the floor and looking around nervously. The cops come in through the main entrance and talk to the owner of the venue. Then they call out to the people inside to get out. People aren't allowed to be in the building because the closed garage doors do not meet fire codes. They want the show called off but the bands and owners protest. Two women are following the cops around, stating that they are from Copwatch and everything they say is being tape recorded. The cops seem annoyed.

After twenty minutes or so of unsure movements on the part of the spectators and police they finally leave saying the show can happen in the small yard



outside but the no one is allowed in the building. It will take the band some time to move all their equipment outside so Bryan and I leave to get a Coke. When we get back the yard of Point A is full of intoxicated young people. Bryan introduces me to everyone as "My friend from high school who goes to A&M. She's here with me." I smile and feel out of place. Everyone is nice.

Soon the band starts and our attentions turn to OiPoli, a UK oi band. They sing songs against imperialism, against homophobia, and against squabbles between straight edged and non-straight edged punks. In some songs they say, "the police are not rad, the police are not bad ass," mimicking American slang and commenting about the earlier run-in with the Austin PD. They hold up pieces of cardboard with the lyrics of the chorus so that the audience can sing along. Most of the people stand and watch some younger looking boys try to slam dance, receiving a less than positive response from the audience. The show ends and we head back to our cars. Bryan bought me a Submission Hold record, a band that is on the Ebullition label that also produces the zine *HeartattaCk*

OiPoli is playing here as a part of the Primate Freedom tour protesting animal testing, the tour brings with them the literature available for sale as well as dozens of free pamphlets. I hear about a protest the next day in a town outside of Austin. Several people ask Bryan and me if we were going. Bryan, not surprisingly, isn't interested.

I've been listing to the same side of *Boy with the Arab Strap* for almost an hour on Amy's crazy old record player. She doesn't have a cd player, just an old school turntable, the kind you can stack records on and they drop down on top of each other. I still haven't wasted the time until Amy gets home. Amy works at Reading Frenzy, an independent store that sells zines and comics. She also works as a lingerie model for extra cash on weekends. Once Amy spent two hours explaining to me why she liked stripping. She told me about Danzine, a zine for "exotic dancers." She likes the way she feels being watched. Amy is in a band, she knows people in bands. She is vegetarian and she doesn't eat white bread. She only eats at locally owned vegan or vegetarian restaurants. She eats out every meal. Amy never listens to cds, she only listens to records. When she shops she carries a sack so that no one will give her a plastic bag. She doesn't have a car, she rides her bike and Portland's public transportation to work. Amy asks that her friends call her Amy Joy or Joy but never Amy.

I can't call Amy anything else. I met her 7th grade at Long Reach Middle School, Long Reach, Mississippi. Her dad was the best teacher at the high school. She hung out with my cool friends, though I didn't hang out with her. Christmas after our freshman year of college she came back with the announcement that she'd dropped out of the private school she went to on the west coast and moved to Portland, Oregon. She told us about unschooling. She challenged us to think in new ways. Ways we just didn't have in southern Mississippi. For me Amy was three nights when I was 18 riding in the back of a car along the beach, streetlights slipping past her face. She left after New Years. I heard she came back once but I didn't see her.

I was lucky to remember about Amy, since I had come all this way to Portland to research zines and punks. Just above Reading Frenzy is an independent press company that helps fledgling zine makers with their creations. It's fully equipped with a pathetically slow computer, an easy-to-use horizontal stapler and a movable typeface printing press. Reading Frenzy is chock full of zines from all over the country as well as local Portland zines. I bought one of everything almost and carried them back to Amy's apartment; neatly arranging them while Amy was at work. Today I was waiting for Amy to come back so I could cook dinner for us. I had discovered a grocery store a couple blocks up and since Amy didn't have any food in her refrigerator I bought groceries and planned to surprise her with food so she didn't have to go out. Amy is an hour late and my mood distills as I wait, chain-smoking, in her living room thinking about "being a Portland punk."

A while ago Bryan told me that kids here were too PC to be of any use. I understand what he means. There's something profoundly ineffectual about Amy and her friends' mix of insecurity and faux emotional interest. They care about so many issues, but can only act on a few. They are concerned with the fair treatment of each other but it usually means everyone gets handled with kid gloves. Even Amy's close friends seem awkwardly distant and reserved as she expresses her caring for them.

I saw two kids having an argument. The boy was loud and yelling things into the street as we walked back home. Amy asked him to stop. He asked why. She spent 20 minutes explaining in agonizing detail the reasons he should stop. The simple request

compounded into an emotional event that could only be resolved with the two of them smoking pot and eventually lapsing into weak silence.

Portland just ain't my town. Maybe my ideal of punk isn't enough like veganism and bicycle revolution to understand. They take it all for granted while they work so hard to tear it down. I have to think of something to do for the last two days.

Leblanc classifies "gutter punks, or "crusties," as traveling street punks, moving across North America on trains or hitchhiking. They express "low levels of social aspiration," as well as a penchant for the abuse of drugs and alcohol (p. 61). During my stay in Portland, I spent some time with a pair of "gutter punks." The following narrative account describes my experiences.

I met them at 6:30 p.m., August 9, on my way home from Union Station. He asked me for a cigarette and I gave it to him. He and his girl; they were punks on the street like any other. You pass a dozen a day in this town and these kids talked to me. She has a short red mohawk, her street name is Sly. His head isn't closely shaved; he uses his real name, Patrick.

I left them but then decided to go back and ask. They were friendly. I told them what I was doing. "I am a researcher comparing Austin and Portland street punks." He was serious and straight forward. They said they would show me around. I walked with them back to Pioneer Square. I got out my recorder to catch some things. So many things to forget, all the information, the details about their lives they poured on me and I with a useless memory struggled to record them. Patrick told me about some slang

words. They named the objects they needed, groundscore-food off the street and snipes-cigarettes found on the street. Walking, Sly found a Little Debbie snack cake next to a building. She grabbed it out, proudly announcing her groundscore, only to find the ants had already claimed it. Strangely enough later Sly bragged to me about all the food she at the local shelter, the Green House. It was more than I could eat in one day, but I didn't have to wake up with the sun, either.

Sly was from Olympia, she'd been in Portland two weeks. Patrick didn't have a story, he said that right off when I met him and he never said anything about his past. Sly did. Later we talked about how we had both taken Latin. Compared notes, shared anecdotes. They were both 19. She'd been living on the streets for two years. She never said why she left.

Soon after we get to Pioneer Square a girl approaches Sly and Patrick. Her name is Little Tweaker. She's excited, her story goes: My friends ditched me in Salem and I didn't have fare. A man gave me his bus stub, good till 8pm, and wrapped in it was $10.

She doesn't know what to do with the money, though she's pretty sure she wants some drugs. Up until this point the only thing I know about these people and drug use is that they don't like pot. They think it's for hippies and yuppies and not cool enough for them. They had met my host in Portland, who would probably describe herself as a scenester in their eyes. She smokes pot. I told them about it and they agreed it was annoying. Patrick suggests cheeva, or heroin. Little Tweaker admits to never having

done it. After a little back and forth she agrees and the whole group with me in tow goes out to find some.

The plan is simple. Patrick says that in order to purchase narcotics you must go over to NE Burnside and know a little Spanish. We get to about 10th and Burnside and we pass two Hispanic men. Patrick stops one and lags behind the group. I take this opportunity to talk to Little Tweaker about her feelings about doing heroin for the first time. She seems dismissive and unconcerned. I also learn that she has two children and is also 19 years old. I never got to find out where her children are, though. Patrick returns after what seems only a few seconds and shows me a damp thumb-sized plastic bag with a black patch in the bottom. This is my first lesson in hard-core narcotics. I make a mental note of what heroin looks like just in case I ever need to reference it again. Patrick then explains to me that they carry drugs in balloon sacs in their mouths so that they are easily swallowed in times of trouble. Later using Ipecac or the intestines to retrieve it, the sac and drugs are safe. Cheeva in hand, they find that the Chevron on the corner doesn't have public restrooms.

Public restrooms in Portland is a topic that comes back later, what they find at the Chevron on Burnside tends to be true throughout downtown. No worries though, we enter a public park next to the Burnside bridge. It's filled with teenagers, mostly skaters. A couple with a baby asks me for a cigarette. I hand them out like candy. Sly, Patrick and Little Tweaker head straight for the bathrooms in the back corner. I sit on a curb about twenty feet away, waiting. It occurs to me that there is something terribly illegal about what they are doing. Also I think about how these kids were very naive to trust

me, I totally could have been a cop. But Patrick said it all, "Cops aren't after the junkies. They want dealers and dealers never make themselves known. Used to be you'd knock on a door and a hand would come out. You'd put money in it, three minutes later the dope."

A couple of cops walk past me. The scan me over and I look them in the eye. They have no idea. There's a girl in the bathroom, 19, with two kids doing heroin for the first time, and you can't do anything about it. A girl runs up to the door banging on it. They come out, walk right past the cops to where I'm sitting. We leave in search of a place to finish. Little Tweaker stuck herself but didn't finish. She clutches the inside of her elbow. She shows me, it's puffy and red.

They walk to the McDonald's downtown on the good side of Burnside. It's the same McDonald's I got breakfast at yesterday. They head for the bathroom and I go to the counter and buy a two-cheeseburger meal to share with them. The salt on the fries tastes good but the hamburger turns my stomach. I haven't eaten much meat here in Vegan Portland. I walk out and offer Patrick some fries. Patrick's not a stupid guy; he's not really a punk either. They both really struck me as good kids. Patrick is squatting in the corner of McDonald's and another large building. He looks up at me and with a swear-to-god-honest face he tells me what he thinks. He asks me why I'm studying them.

What is it for? I try to explain that I feel if subcultures don't get documented that they'll be lost ,obscure and forgotten. The memories of junkies and punks and all the things they believed and rebelled against will die with their passing. I say I believe in

anthropology and though I myself don't count as punk, I believe enough in it to try to preserve it. He agrees that I'm not punk and tells me that there is something essentially preppy about me. I note that in the half hour he has known me he can see the thing I hide from myself, a desire to be in the subculture I cannot identify with. But he tells me something so astonishing. I wish, like a good ethnographer, I had a tape recorder. At times like these, though it's impossible, I wish I had good enough equipment to get it all down, so I wouldn't have to remember. He tells me there's nothing to find. "A junkie is a junkie no matter what. Just kids with problems. It's not punk, it's not anything, they just gave up, they don't care. Living on the street, being a junkie, it's easy."

He looks at me, his intent eyes seem honest, "You aren't going to find anything." I feel so foolish, naive, and optimistic. I spent all this time here looking for street kids with social agendas. He tells me all I have are street kids, junkies. The word rattles around me. I never thought of them like that. I saw them on the street, I thought *punks*, I saw Patrick's Dead Kennedys shirt, and I thought, *punk*, never *junkie*. What about doing things your own way and ignoring the status quo? I don't know.

"We're junkies."

Sly and Little Tweaker came out of the bathroom.

We leave headed back to Pioneer Square. A kid passes us. I didn't really notice him, but Patrick leans over, "What do you think about him?"

"That kid, what am I supposed to?" I barely noticed him walk past. He looked like everyone else in Portland, facial piercings, maybe a tattoo, and dark mussy hair.

"That's no kid, he's probably 25. You know how hard it is for him to get a good job? I went to carpenter school for two years. I had my labret pierced, eight in my ear, my nose," he shows me where all his holes used to be. "I've seen them throw my application away even before I walked out."

We turn the corner. I ask Sly if she would ever want to leave the streets. She looks at me and says, "if you give up you weren't true to yourself."

I wonder about what she's giving up. Back at Pioneer Square we sit down. Brice, a tall skinny kid with a shaved head, sat down cross legged in front of me. Word has gotten around; he wanted to talk to me, the researcher. He started out telling me about where he came from, SLC punk, on the street four years, 21 years old. Then he complains about bathrooms. How there are no public bathrooms in downtown Portland, the few there are close at dark.

"I know what it's for, I mean, it's all the junkies. They ruin it for everyone. I mean, the city won't let me piss." Brice really likes Queen; I can see it fits him. He's been clean for two years. Brice also tells me about Families. I thought he was talking about being family, but it turns out even street punks have bureaucracy. Little Tweaker is a member. Her family, Noristic Gutter Punks, has a cryptic symbol that looks like the sXe. No one of them had ever heard of straight edge, or substance free punks. I lied and said that most of the punks in Austin were sXe. I wanted to know what they thought. They seemed to respect Austin. When Sly and Patrick heard I lived nearby they expressed a desire to go there some day. Sly said she was planning a trip to New Orleans via Austin.

A boy comes up to Sly and asks her to pierce his ear. She agrees quickly but Patrick stops her. He asks the boy, "Do you have AIDS?"

"No."

"Have you been tested?"

"Yes."

"How long ago?"

"6 months." The answer gets the ok and she digs out some bleach and a safety pin. She leans over him, in the dark I can only make out their shadows.

"Did you hear the pop?" She laughs. It's time for me to go, civil twilight fading behind the city. I imagine the walk up from 5th-14th to Amy's apartment, home.

They want me to stay. They talked earlier about suicide bridge, where they squat at night. I'm not allowed to know where it is, and if I want to go there I have to get permission from above. Now they want me to come. I wonder, is my time with them over? What else do I have to learn? I walk up to Amy's 1920's studio apartment. It's beautiful. In the few days I've been here, with my very own key I've started to think of it as my own Holly Golightly home. It is urban chic with leaky faucets and no heat or air. Amy is home. I tell her what's been happening. She saw me earlier when I first met them. It's a long time later and she wonders where I've been. I tell her, breathless and excited. She is my ally in my discovery. I feel like I'm the first person to ever talk to street punks. I've broken a barrier I didn't know about until this morning and I'm ecstatic.

Amy doesn't approve though. "You better not take anything with you," she says.

"Why?"

"They're junkies. They'll take anything."

"Maybe so, but I don't think they'd bother me. I'm too much of a novelty for them."

"Whatever, you'll probably get jumped."

Amy is crazy and she's ruined my utopian dream sequence of well meaning punks living out the suburban fantasy. I decide to go to spite her. I leave my camera, and bring only an ID, a notebook, and a tape recorder. Back at Pioneer Square, I see Sly and Patrick waiting for me. They had almost given up. I apologize. It's night now. I look around at the plaza still full of youth milling around smoking and talking.

Patrick says, "Let's go." I follow. I feel myself getting nervous. Amy's warning replays in my head. I start to wonder when I will reach the time when I can't turn back. I wonder if they will beat me up. What would I do? Would Sly and Patrick defend me? I imagine a mob of fists and feet. I remember a movie and a man biting a curb as they stomp his head. My breathing shallows.

We've only walked 50 ft to the other side of the square and I'm ready to run. I must have looked bad because Patrick asks, "What's wrong?"

"I'm afraid."

"What are you afraid of?"

"I can't say." I feel something on my shoulder; I jump, my flesh recoiling tightly along my spine. Sly is putting her arm around me. She lays her head on my shoulder.

"It's ok. You're with us."

I breathe in and take a step forward. I am introduced to Tea Cup and Male Ice. They are so high, neither of them can understand anything I say to them. I repeat my name several times, before giving up. Tea Cup assents to my presence and we wait to board the squat train.

The city of Portland has some of the best public transportation in the country. Both its buses and trains run free downtown for the benefit of both workers and vagrants. The train is clean and efficient, bright yellow and full of passengers. It's about 7pm and people are going home. The punks are going home too. They take up a full back corner of the bus. I can feel the eyes of the other passengers on me. First stop, people get off. I wonder where I am. Next stop I peer out the sliding doors. I recognize the stadium near Amy's house. I see myself taking the step off the train and away from them. One step. I feel my legs move, one step. My heart is racing. If I leave I will never know but here is my moment for escape. The moment I may look back on thinking if I had only left then. Behind me I hear laughing and Tea Cup says loudly, "Don't fuck with me, I can fuck all of you up. Except for her, cause she's protected."

I turn around and fifteen punks are staring right at me. Tea Cup slips me a toothy grin, I glance at Sly, and she's beaming. I'm not sure what's been going on. I hear the doors close. I'm going on. The next stop we get off and walk north toward an overpass. We stop just ahead of the bridge and Tea Cup consults with someone on the street. They have to be careful tonight. I follow Tea Cup and Sly and Patrick follow me. I get instructions on how to get up the bridge.

"Look for cars. Run up along the concrete curb until the tree, duck in. Hurry before the next car comes." I rush, I don't know why. I'm on the lookout, I'm hiding from I don't know what. Under the bridge are an opening and a slab of concrete piled with blankets, sleeping bags and canvas. We sit down. The night is starting to chill. I meet a girl named Wheat Thin who isn't very thin and she points up at the bridge.

"It looks like stained glass doesn't it?"

I look up and the bridge expands high above across the street neatly framing the trees on the other side. A street lamp just south illuminates the piece, it is beautiful. My heart pulls in my chest, partly to see something so beautiful after being so afraid and partly in sorrow over not bringing a camera. I decide that Amy is a lunatic and it must be all the pot she smokes all day that makes her so paranoid and ready to judge others. I'm still standing there in awe when I realize there is a light behind me.

Sly and Patrick have lit a candle among the blankets. They're holding a spoon while Wheat Thin and Tea Cup rustle around in their bag for sterile gauze. Wheat Thin pulls out a plastic bag stuffed with squares of cotton, bottles of alcohol, clean packs of needles and medical tape. Before I can ask her, she says, "My fiancé shoots crystal meth. I carry it with me, just in case. He doesn't know but sometimes I do it too." Wheat Thin has an apartment she shares with her fiancé. Tea Cup tries to convince her to stay the night at the bridge but she has to wake up early to go to see her fiancée at court. He and Tea Cup were arrested with possession yesterday. She spent fifteen hours in jail because she got caught with a needle in her arms. Tea Cup got out though because it was only her second offense. There's not much light under the bridge. I sit farthest

from the candle that's cooking their drugs. I don't remember them buying any. I don't know where they got the money.

"Have you ever done this before?" Patrick asks Tea Cup

"Yeah, yesterday."

"This is coke."

"Yeah, yesterday."

Patrick and Sly have never shot up coke before. Patrick starts out with 5mg because he has a weak heart and lungs. Then he does 25. Tea Cup and Sly each do 20mg. Wheat Thin leaves for her apartment. Sly says it tingles in her spine like heroin, but Patrick doesn't feel anything. Sly looks back at me, she closes her eyes and mouths to me, "I'm sorry." She knows I've never seen this before.

Moments later the short "blip" of a siren stills my breath. I leap up. I remember Sly telling me about periodic raids on the bridge to discourage the homeless from sleeping there. I look back at the mass huddled around the candle. A cop wouldn't know the difference. Me and them, junkie and researcher, it'll all be the same to some tired cop busting a bunch of kids at 10:30 on a Wednesday night. Nothing comes after the "blip," just a warning. Tea Cup walks around, checking things out. Sly is nervous and wants to leave the bridge. Everyone apologizes to me. Tea Cup decides to go back into town and find something to do. Patrick and Sly decided to walk to Washington Park and sleep in the bushes. They pack a blanket on me and I walk with them to a safe looking flat spot. We spread out the blankets and talk about movies. I tell them about movies they haven't seen yet. I suppose they don't get to see very many movies.

Patrick asks me about my family and how much money they have. They make me talk about myself for about an hour and then it's time to sleep. Sly gives me her email address. She can check it for free at the library. I didn't know. She tells me how to get a day pass so I can check my mail there tomorrow.

I already know that I can't sleep there with them. I finally felt safe, but I knew that I had done all I could. I spread the blanket over them and walk softly through the leaves back to the road. I follow the road to the train and the train back to Amy's. Amy isn't home. It's 11:30pm. I take a shower. I'm not sure what to feel. I think about Amy's warning and how stupid I was to leave my camera. I think about the rest of my life trying to remember what that tree looked like and what color eyes Sly had. I pick up my camera and stand on Amy's balcony. I scan the city from the fourth floor and find Washington Park. I can just barely see the tallest trees. I snap a picture.

Conclusion

I am not attempting to draw a line between narration, voice, and authorship, but to acknowledge their conflict. In this conflict voices and perspectives are stifled with every point I choose to include or exclude from my analysis. I recognize this and want my reader to consider the issues that I, as author, have brought to the table. I do not mean to imply that my methodology provides me with a uniquely privileged stance, but rather it is attempt to draw attention to the fact that it is me, as researcher, that is doing this analysis.

My position cannot be universalized because I am a particular individual who experienced particular things unable to be perfectly replicated. I have not included

excerpts from the 100 plus zines that I collected, I did not include all of the narrative parts I initially wrote, and I am biased. I cannot resolve these issues by exhaustively including every voice, every opinion, and every piece of text. I am not punk and even if I was a punk I could never represent the entire punk community. Nor can I, as punk, non-punk, or researcher, tell the reader, what punk is.

In the narrative voice I have attempted to elicit the contradictions in the meaning of punk and the diverse people who locate themselves within the words punk/hardcore. The excerpts try to show how zines carry similarly contradicting messages. Vegan and non-vegan, both are punk and the opposition isn't problematic. Straightedge or junkie people who define themselves according to punk do so for their own reasons and it ultimately is not for me to decide which is right or comprehensive. What I can do however is offer the information I've collected as experience to readers and allow them to draw lines or conclusions as they see fit. Readers bring unique interpretations, biases, and lifestyles to this text just as I, as author, bring my own.

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